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RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0658  
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 2200  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1006  
RUEHPG/AMEMBASSY PRAGUE 0230  
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM 0068  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NOUAKCHOTT 000346

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TAGS: [KDEM](#) [MR](#) [PGOV](#)  
SUBJECT: SENEGALESE OPEN THE DOOR

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Classified By: Ambassador Mark M. Boulware for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary. Senegalese Foreign Minister Gadio and fellow mediators convoked on May 21 representatives of members of the International Contact Group on Mauritania to announce agreement in principle between major protagonists to end Mauritania,s political crisis. The deal, to be announced as early as May 25, calls for a unity government to be created by President Abdallahi who would then resign opening the way for elections to take place July 11, after revision of electoral lists. Details, including the composition of the unity government remain to be worked out. Gadio calls for international support in moving toward final agreement and in organizing and conducting elections. End summary.

¶2. (C) The mediation team lead by Senegalese Foreign Minister Gadio and including UN Special Representative Djinnit, AU Peace and Security Commissioner Lamamra and Ravaa El Madani, Special Envoy to AU President Ghadafi convoked on May 21 representatives of members of the International Contact Group on Mauritania for an update on its efforts. Gadio noted that the mediators had achieved agreement in principle from the three main protagonists, General Aziz, RFD President Ould Daddah and FNDD President Ould Maouloud, on a framework that would provide a way out of Mauritania,s current political crisis. Gadio emphasized that this was not a final agreement and that the three parties would meet with mediators later in the evening to work out the terms of the written proposal.

¶3. (C) The agreement, in its current form, calls for the establishment of a government of national unity by decree signed by President Abdallahi, the President,s resignation and the constitutional transfer of power to Senate President Ba Mbare, already nominally acting in that capacity since General Aziz, resignation from the High Council of State. The unity government would establish a new National Electoral Commission that would proceed immediately to an exceptional revision of electoral lists over the period of one month. New candidates, including President Abdallahi if he wishes, would be accepted, the participation of opposition candidates being a key element of the deal. The first round of elections would be held on July 11 with a second round July

15, if necessary. International observers would be welcome and encouraged.

¶4. (C) Gadio noted that mediators had directly engaged the Ministry of Justice on the issue of FNDD prisoners and, having obtained Aziz, assurance that he would not oppose their release, are relatively confident that the issue will be resolved. Mediators understood of Aziz, reluctance to completely suspend his own campaign without a commitment by opposition candidates and agreement on participation and suspension is a part of the proposal. Aziz, asked mediators to obtain agreement on suspension of campaigning directly from the three other declared candidates (all of whom arrived to meet the mediating team as contact group members were departing).

¶5. (C) While observing that the agreement in principle on the main points was a major achievement, Gadio cautioned that work remained to be done. He noted that there was minimal trust between the protagonists and called for the international community to lend support and encouragement to keep the process on track. He hoped that the unity government could be created as early as Monday May 24 but said that the deal still had to be sold to rank and file and the allocation of government posts would be challenging. He recalled that the timeframe for organizing new elections was short, much shorter in fact than one of the parties thought reasonable. Compromise on dates could only be reached, he said, by promising to call on the international community to provide urgent and robust support to agreed upon elections. Gadio also called up on the members of the international community to sign as witnesses to the final agreement to bolster the confidence by all parties that the terms will be observed. He opined that, in spite of mutual mistrust, all the parties were aware of the deteriorating situation in the

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country and the growing dangers inherent in that.

¶6. (C) AU PSC Commissioner Lamamra likewise appealed for continuing engagement by the international community to see this agreement through. He noted that although not perfect, the agreement amounted to a rejection of the coup of August 6, 2008 since the national unity government will be created by the legitimate, elected president and power will pass to his constitutional successor with new elections that also conform to the constitution. He said that the agreement will strengthen the hand of the AU in dealing with unconstitutional changes in government elsewhere on the continent.

¶7. (C) Comment: This is an imperfect agreement but almost certainly the very best achievable solution to a problem that increasingly threatened to spin out of control in spite of the considerable diplomatic time and energy expended by the international community. Moreover, it does mean a reversal of the coup, if only morally and legally, and a return to constitutional order. Obviously, an Aziz victory cannot be excluded and is, in fact, the most likely result of new elections. Even in victory, however, Aziz is likely to be somewhat chastened by his experience and will find himself very much in need of both internal allies and the international community to govern with any success. Making this arrangement work will require continued engagement by Mauritania's partners, including the US, in particular urgent and significant assistance with the elections process.

BOULWARE